

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action dated 14 June 2006, the specification was objected to, claims 3, 10-11, 14, 19, and 26 were objected to, and claims 1-30 were rejected. In this amendment, claim 4 is cancelled, and claims 1, 3, 5-6, 10-11, 14, 18-19, and 26 are amended. Claims 1-3 and 5-30 remain pending in this application. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the application by the Examiner in light of the following amendments and remarks.

Specification:

The Examiner has pointed out that the title is not descriptive and accordingly the title is changed (as shown in page 2 of this paper). Applicant thanks the Examiner for pointing out the mistakes in paragraphs 22 and 26, and accordingly the paragraphs have been replaced.

Claim Objections:

Claims 3, 10-11, 14, 19, 26 have been modified to correct the informalities as pointed out by the Examiner. The Applicant requests the Examiner to withdraw the objection.

Rejections under 35 U. S. C 102 (b)

Claims 1-8, 10, 12, 17-22, 24 and 29-30 have been rejected as being anticipated by Katz et al., US 4983472 (hereinafter Katz). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection and submits that Katz does not disclose all elements of amended claim 1 and other independent claims 18 and 30.

Katz appears to describe a fuel cell 10 with a separator plate 12 located between fuel cell 10 and an adjacent cell. An anode 14 is formed with longitudinally extending grooves and a matrix 18 contains electrolyte in contact with anode 14. Fuel 16 flows between the anode and the separator plate. Collector plate 22 has a planar surface 24 in contact with the cathode 20. The raised arches 26 and 28 are in contact with the next separator plate 25.

Katz neither discloses nor suggests using a conducting layer between an anode and/or cathode and an interconnect. Element 22 of Katz, although conducting, functions as a collector plate and is not a "conducting layer" in contact with an interconnect and an anode or cathode (claim 1) and is not disposed on an anode or cathode to reduce interface interference (claims 18 and 30). Collector plate of Katz is at most in contact with a cathode and a separator plate.

Claim 1 recites

a conducting layer in contact with at least one of said cathode layer and said anode layer ... and ... each interconnect in contact with a respective conducting layer of a respective one of the plurality of fuel cells,

and claims 18 and 30 each recite

a conducting layer disposed on at least one of said cathode layer and said anode layer to reduce interface resistance between said anode layer and said anode interconnect and between said

cathode layer and said cathode interconnect.

Because these recitations are not disclosed by Katz, Applicant submits that independent claims 1, 18 and 30 and claims 1, 18 and 30 are patentably distinct. Claims 2-8, 10, 12, 17, 19-22, 24 and 29 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1 and 18. The Applicant respectfully submits for the reasons discussed above that claims 2-8, 10, 12, 17, 19-22, 24 and 29 are similarly allowable over the applied reference

Rejections under 35 U. S. C 103 (a)

Claims 9 and 23 have been rejected as unpatentable over Katz in view of Akikusa et al (JP 2002-237312). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. Claims 9 and 23 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1 or claim 18. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1 and 18 are patentably distinct from Katz for the reasons discussed above. Therefore claims 9 and 23 are similarly allowable over the applied references regardless of whether Akikusa relates to their more specific recitations.

Claims 11, 13-16 and 25-28 have been rejected as unpatentable over Katz in view of Mardilovich et al (US2004/0081878). Each of claims 11, 13-16 and 25-28 depends directly or indirectly from claim 1 or claim 18. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1 and 18 are patentably distinct from Katz for the reasons discussed above. Therefore claims 11, 13-16 and 25-28 are similarly allowable over the applied references regardless of whether Mardilovich relates to their more specific recitations.

Claims 13-16 and 25-28 have been rejected as unpatentable over Katz in view of Hoshino et al. (JP 2002-216807). Each of claims 13-16 and 25-28 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1 or claim 18. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1 and 18 are patentably distinct from Katz for the reasons discussed above. Therefore claims 13-16 and 25-28 are similarly allowable over the applied references regardless of whether Hoshino relates to their more specific recitations.

Summary

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the claimed invention defines allowable subject matter over the applied art. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested, and allowance of the claims is respectfully solicited. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is needed to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

By /Ann M. Agosti/
Ann M. Agosti
Reg. No. 37,372
General Electric Company
Building K1, Room 3A66
Niskayuna, New York 12309
Telephone: (518) 387-7713